



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2022

Dr. Karama Neal
Administrator –
USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW.
STOP 3201
Washington, DC, 20250-3201

Dr. Karama Neal,

As the Congressman for the 3rd District of Louisiana, I am pleased to write this letter of support for Guidry's Catfish/Processors' application to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP) funding to construct and equip a new par fry processing facility and expand the capacity of their existing facility.

U.S. farm-raised catfish has long been a staple of consumers in Southern states from the time of the earliest Native Americans. Catfish is the 8th -most consumed seafood in the U.S. This proposal is from a family-owned catfish processor in Louisiana, managed and operated by the second generation of the Guidry family, who has brought a progressive and innovative spirit to the company. Guidry's Catfish, Inc., in cooperation with Processor's Inc. (same owners), is currently operating at maximum processing capacity. Given the high demand for U.S. catfish products, processing plants have not been able to meet customer demand. U.S. consumer preferences have changed towards increased online sales, increased seafood sales in supermarkets, and greater convenience.

This proposal by Guidry's Catfish/Processor's seeks funding that would be used exclusively to purchase equipment for: 1) a new par-frying catfish processing line; and 2) expansion and modernization of its existing catfish processing equipment; and 3) robotic technologies to replace the need for heavy, repetitive lifting by manual labor. The total project cost is \$35.3 million, of which \$7.06 million (of the total equipment cost of \$11.7 million) is requested from this grant for the purchase of new equipment. Financing is in place for construction of the new facility with a scheduled start date of June 2022.

I fully support Guidry's Catfish/Processors' USDA MPPEP grant application, and I respectfully ask that you give your full consideration to their proposal. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Higgins".

Clay Higgins
Member of Congress